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ABSTRACT

This document identifies characteristics and patterns of characteristics of those who have leisure as a mid-life option. A comparison was made between individuals electing to pursue leisure and those electing to enter teaching at this life stage. Results of structured interviews, statistical results, and an analysis of a life satisfaction scale are given. In comparisons of teachers with those electing leisure, significant differences were observed in four categories: importance of religion, importance of television, importance of new experiences, and importance of sexual relationships. Leisure advocates' values were higher only in the television category. In the secondary comparisons (males/females), three significant differences were observed: importance of non-work activities, importance of literature, and importance of the outdoors. Males leaned toward the importance of the outdoors. The results of the life satisfaction scale found no significant differences in comparisons between teachers/leisure, males/females, female teachers/male teachers, and leisure females/leisure males. (Author/JD)

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Teaching, An Alternative to Leisure: Ozark Case Studies of Mid-Life Retirees

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Abstract

Teaching, An Alternative to Leisure: Ozark Case Studies
Of Mid-Life Retirees

This document identifies characteristics and patterns of characteristics of those who have leisure as a mid-life option. A comparison was made between individuals electing to pursue leisure and those electing to enter teaching at this life stage. Results of structured interviews, statistical results, and an analysis of a life satisfaction scale is given.

In comparisons of teachers with those electing leisure significant differences were observed in four categories: Importance of religion, Importance of television, Importance of new experiences, and Importance of sexual relationships, the leisure advocate being higher only in the television category. In the secondary comparisons (males/females) the following three significant differences (.05) were observed: Importance of non-work activities, Importance of literature, and Importance of outdoors, men leaning toward the Importance of outdoors. The results of the Life Satisfaction Scale found no significant differences (.05) in comparisons between teachers/leisure, males/females, female teachers/male teachers, and leisure females/leisure males.

Teaching, An Alternative to Leisure: Ozark
Case Studies of Mid-Life Retirees

The uniqueness of the Ozark region stimulated the writers to investigate characteristics of those who could afford leisure at mid-life. The interest of the writers in teaching stimulated the comparison of those who elected teaching with those who did not from this leisure group. The fundamental question: Is there a difference between individuals who elect leisure and those who elect teaching?

Collection of the data was facilitated by a review of the literature and contact with two professionals in the area. A recent search of the literature reveals that little study has been directed toward the characteristics of individuals who elect teaching as a mid-life career choice. Searches of ERIC and Sociological abstracts have nothing on this topic. A DIALOG search from the Psycinfo database yielded the following four citations: 1) occupational change in mid-life: a comparison study of second-career seminarians, active priests, and resigned priests on self-concept, work values, and job satisfaction, 2) Personality and work environment congruence of mid-life career changes, 3) University School of Education and Technological Institute masters graduates, 1955-1967, and 4) Mid-career changes: self-selected or externally mandated? None of the above were closely related to the election of teaching as a mid-life career choice.

A structured interview format created by the writers and Havighurst's Life Satisfaction Scale were used for the collection of the data (see Appendix 1 & 2). The twenty subjects were selected according to the following criteria: 1) affinity for the Ozark region, 2) adequate

personal resources to allow the mid-life choice of leisure, 3) sex, and 4) occupation. The study included ten women with five choosing teaching as a mid-life option and ten men five of whom chose teaching. In order to maintain this balance three who were originally identified for this study were unable to be reached for interviews and were subsequently replaced.

The procedure was for the writers to interview each subject on the various topics in the interview format. The groups can be briefly described as follows: The males electing leisure ranged in age from 50 to 69 (56.8 average); all had high school educations except one who had a college degree; all were married except one; and had contracting, drama, quarrying, and military (2) careers. The females electing leisure ranged in age from 45 to 58 (average 52); all had college degrees; all were married; and had accounting, public relations, bookstore manager, and homemaking (2) careers. The males electing teaching ranged in age from 35-59 (average 47.2); all had college degrees; all were married; and had military, military and farming, military and ministry, retail sales, and corporate sales careers. The females electing teaching ranged in ages from 38 to 53 (average 46.4); all had college degrees; all were married; and had real estate sales, factory work, homemaking, medical technology, and nursing careers.

The following table shows the summaries of responses by groups from scaled choices 1 to 5 (5 being strong).

Table 1
Responses by Groups
(Males, Females, Teachers, Leisures)
N = 20

I. Interview Outline

5 = Strong 1 = Weak	Males Who Elected Teaching	Males Who Elected Leisure	Females Who Elected Teaching	Females Who Elected Leisure
1. How important was your work in your life?	3.8	5.0	3.2	3.6
2. How important were family/friends in your life?	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.6
3. How important was the geographical location to you in your life?	2.8	3.4	3.4	3.4
4. How important were your non-work activities?	2.8	2.0	4.2	4.0
5. How inclined to help others would you characterize yourself?	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.2
6. How important is religion in your life?	3.8	2.4	5.0	3.5
7. How strong is your sense of right/wrong?	4.8	4.6	5.0	4.2
8. How important is music in your life?	4.0	3.8	3.8	4.0
9. How important is literature in your life?	3.4	1.6	4.0	3.8
10. How important is T.V. in your life?	1.8	4.0	2.0	2.6
11. How important is the outdoors in your life?	4.6	4.4	3.8	2.6
12. How important is travel in your life?	4.2	2.6	4.0	4.0
13. How important are sports in your life?	3.4	2.2	2.0	1.6
14. How important is food in your life?	3.8	4.4	4.2	3.4
15. How important is horticulture in your life?	2.8	3.8	2.6	2.0
16. How important is the world of ideas in your life?	4.6	3.4	4.6	4.4
17. How important are new experiences in your life?	4.2	2.4	4.4	3.6
18. How important are sexual relationships in your life?	4.0	3.0	4.4	3.4

II. Place yourself on the Continuum between:

Paperwork _____ 1 2 3 4 5	Personal Relationships	3.8	4.8	4.4	4.4
Possessions _____ 1 2 3 4 5	Personal Relationships	4.2	2.8	4.2	4.4
Duty _____ 1 2 3 4 5	Personal Relationships	2.4	2.8	3.4	3.2
Observer _____ 1 2 3 4 5	Participant	4.2	2.4	3.2	3.6

The comparisons first pursued were those between those who elected leisure and those who did not (teachers). The following table shows the results by category based on the statistical comparison afforded by the t-test of independence.

Table 2

Comparisons of Teachers with Those Electing Leisure

N = 20 d.f. = 18		Leisure Means	Teacher Means	t-value	Significant at .05?
1.	Importance of work	4.3	3.5	1.42	No
2.	Importance of family/friends	4.6	4.6	0	No
3.	Importance of geographical location	3.4	3.1	.54	No
4.	Importance of non-work activities	3.0	3.5	-.75	No
5.	Inclination to help others	4.5	4.7	-.88	No
6.	Importance of religion	2.95	4.4	-2.41	Yes
7.	Strength of right/wrong sense	4.4	4.9	-1.75	No
8.	Importance of music	3.9	3.9	0	No
9.	Importance of literature	2.7	3.7	-1.73	No
10.	Importance of television	3.3	1.9	2.56	Yes
11.	Importance of outdoors	3.5	4.3	-1.21	No
12.	Importance of travel	3.3	4.1	-1.36	No
13.	Importance of sports	1.9	2.7	-1.41	No
14.	Importance of food	3.9	4.0	.22	No
15.	Importance of horticulture	2.9	2.7	.30	No
16.	Importance of the world of ideas	3.9	4.6	-1.60	No
17.	Importance of new experiences	3.0	4.3	-2.90	Yes
18.	Importance of sexual relationships	3.2	4.2	-2.61	Yes
II.	Paperwork - Personal Relationships	4.6	4.1	1.56	No
	Possessions - Personal Relationships	3.5	4.2	-1.42	No
	Duty - Personal Relationships	3.0	2.9	.22	No
	Observer - Participant	3.0	3.7	-1.41	No

The writers observed significant differences in four categories: Importance of religion, Importance of television, Importance of new experiences, and Importance of sexual relationships, the leisure advocates being higher only in the television category.

The secondary comparisons (those between males and females) were then computed. The following table shows the results by category based on the same statistical technique.

Table 3

Comparisons of Men and Women

N = 20 d.f. = 18		Men	Women	t-value	Significant at .05?
1.	Importance of work	4.4	3.4	1.83	No
2.	Importance of family/friends	4.7	4.5	.65	No
3.	Importance of geographical location	3.1	3.4	-.54	No
4.	Importance of non-work activities	2.4	4.1	-3.09	Yes
5.	Inclination to help others	4.7	4.5	.88	No
6.	Importance of religion	3.1	4.25	-1.98	No
7.	Strength of right/wrong sense	4.7	4.6	.33	No
8.	Importance of music	3.9	3.9	-.75	No
9.	Importance of literature	2.5	3.9	-2.64	Yes
10.	Importance of television	2.9	2.3	.96	No
11.	Importance of outdoors	4.5	3.2	2.51	Yes
12.	Importance of travel	3.4	4.0	-.99	No
13.	Importance of sports	2.8	1.8	1.82	No
14.	Importance of food	4.1	3.8	.63	No
15.	Importance of horticulture	3.3	2.3	1.58	No
16.	Importance of the world of ideas	4.0	4.5	-1.10	No
17.	Importance of new experiences	3.3	4.0	-1.35	No
18.	Importance of sexual relationships	3.5	3.9	-.90	No
II.	Paperwork - Personal Relationships	4.3	4.4	-.92	No
	Possessions - Personal Relationships	3.5	4.3	-1.98	No
	Duty - Personal Relationships	2.6	3.3	-1.63	No
	Observer - Participant	3.3	3.4	.19	No

The writers observed significant differences in three categories: Importance of non-work activities, Importance of literature, and Importance of outdoors, men leaning toward the Importance of outdoors.

The interview also provided for open responses on the three topics: The Good Life, The Ideal Companion, and The Successful Person. By groups the responses were:

The good life:

Female, not teachers:

enough physical for comfort, enough intellectual for growth, guidance from other sources for spiritual growth

enough money to do what you need or want to do. Can do what you want to do.

accomplished something that made the world better

people whom you care about and who care about you

personal satisfaction, right relationships with people, using talents, a comfortable existence

Female, teachers:

Worship my God, family content, enough money to be comfortable

Having a happy home life, healthy children, and some intellectual fulfillment.

Sense of accomplishing (on-going), good friends (stimulating).

Proper relationship with God and your fellowman.

enjoyment work & friends, outdoors

Male, not teachers:

warm place, plenty food, money for basic needs, companionship, friends

security, peace of mind

freedom from worry, luxury of having work you can do, personal relationships with persons you can talk to.

able to do what you want with family, in general enjoyment of life

control of things around you.

Male, teacher:

Content in what you are doing day in and day out, not only for monetary gain.

Add to/be a part of society.

An organized life that leads to creative production.

Enough money to do what you want to do. - not luxury -

having the love of family and friends, enough to eat and shelter.

The ideal companion:

Female, not teacher:

good communication, shares most of your views, ideals or things to do.

has a sense of communication with you, is supportive (allowing one to develop as individual) high trust level

one who shares your ideas on what is important in life

same interests at least part of time, can afford your interests, accepts and takes responsibility without a hassle

understanding, intelligent, curious, energetic, purposeful

Female, teacher:

support, love, console

One with whom I can share ideas, trust, fun; cares for me

intellect, provider, thoughtful, compassionate

considerate, share their life with you, protects and provides

easy to get along with, same interests

Male, not teacher:

communicate, same philosophy

trust

persons you can talk to, persons who don't rush you

wife - loveable, understanding, friendly

agreeable, pleasant

Male, teacher:

trustworthy - give and take - freedom to be yourself

similar interests, same religion, outgoing, same goals

patient, flexible, affectionate

loving, understanding, supportive

sharing, give and take, compromise, love and respect

The successful person:

Female, not teacher:

Not money above all, enjoys work (with a living)

one who continues to grow and change and adapt as an individual (choosing individual goals)

one who accomplishes something with his life.

achieve his own personal goals and be happy with himself, get some rewards

understanding, intelligent, curious, energetic, purposeful, no emphasis on money, service oriented

Female, teacher:

attained goals, still working toward them

happy doing what they do

contributing to society at any level

Person who knows himself and likes himself

All rounded individual, middle of road, weighs things equally

Male, not teacher:

those to share good life

honest, sober, reliable, work hard, saving

perplexed on this topic, conflict with seeking it, return to basics, knows himself, being able to communicate

do what you want to do; select your friends

Someone who loves life and not money

Male, teacher:

A person who looks forward to tomorrow

one who fulfills his needs within context of society

intelligent, considerate, productive

The person who can do what he wants (his own person)

has the love of family and friends

The Life Satisfaction Index Z (LSIZ) developed by Havighurst and used by Harris (1975) in his NCOA study was used as an index of life satisfaction for this study to afford a more stabilizing frame of reference. The original instrument developed by Dr. Robert Havighurst was further tested by Adams (1969). The scoring system devised by Wood, Wylie, and Shaefer (1969) and further tested by Harris was the scoring system employed for this research. This system gives two points for each agreement with a positive statement indicating high life satisfaction or disagreement with a negative statement, one point for each "not sure," and zero points for each disagreement with a positive statement or agreement with a negative statement. The scale can range from 0 to 36. This scoring system is preferred, on the grounds of increased information, to the zero-one system originally suggested. Adams (1969) also called the LSIZ fair estimate of life satisfaction after studying an elderly sample of 508 persons in a Missouri small town.

The results of the LSIZ instrument is presented in tables 4 and 5.

Table 4

Comparisons on the Life Satisfaction Indices

N = 20 d.f. = 18	Respective Means	t-value	Significant at .05?
Teachers/those electing leisure	28.6/26.2	.81	No
Males/Females	28.6/26.2	.81	No

Table 5

Other Comparison on the Life Satisfaction Indices

N = 10 d.f. = 8	Respective Means	t-value	Significant at .05?
Female Teacher/Male Teacher	27.2/30.0	-.91	No
Leisure Females/Leisure Males	30.0/22.4	1.62	No

The writers noted no significant differences in these comparisons in Tables 4 and 5. From these results the writers see strong evidence of stability in the various comparisons between these groups. However, there are other questions to be considered beyond those already addressed. Exactly why do the differences exist between the teachers and those who elected leisure? The reader will remember that these differed on Importance of television (leisure preference) and importance of new experience, religion, and sexual relationships (teacher preferences). Do extreme answers on the scales tend to exert too great an effect on the results? (This effect could be tested by squaring the rating answers and testing for significance between the means squared and those not.) Does a difference between one of the four groups and the other three groups affect the outcome in a biased manner? (This effect can be tested by ANOVA technique.) Of course, the study can be improved by enlarging and randomizing the samples, as stated earlier. However, the writers found the study gave most interesting results and directions for improvements.

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APPENDIX

1. Structured Interview Form
2. Life Satisfaction Scale

Appendix 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Sex: Male_____ Female_____

Age: _____

Teacher: Yes_____ No_____

I. Interview Outline

5 = Strong 1 = Weak

1. How important was your work in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

   What were the things you liked most?

   What were the things you liked least?

2. How important were family/friends in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

   What in these relationships were most favorable?

   What in these relationships were least favorable?

3. How important was the geographical location to you in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

   What about the location was most favorable?

   What about the location was least favorable?

4. How important were your non-work activities? 1 2 3 4 5

   What was most enjoyable in these activities?

   What was least enjoyable in these activities?

5. How inclined to help others would you characterize yourself? 1 2 3 4 5

6. How important is religion in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

7. How strong is your sense of right/wrong? 1 2 3 4 5

8. How important is music in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

9. How important is literature in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

10. How important is T.V. in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

11. How important is the outdoors in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

12. How important is travel in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

13. How important are sports in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

14. How important is food in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

15. How important is horticulture in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

16. How important is the world of ideas in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

17. How important are new experiences in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Like

Dislike

18. How important are sexual relationships in your life? 1 2 3 4 5

Positive Influences

Negative Influences

II. Place yourself on the Continuum between:

Paperwork _____ Personal Relationships
1 2 3 4 5

Possessions _____ Personal Relationships
1 2 3 4 5

Duty _____ Personal Relationships
1 2 3 4 5

Observer _____ Participant
1 2 3 4 5

III. In your own words describe briefly:

The good life:

The ideal companion:

The successful person:

Other comments:

Table 1

Age, Education, Occupation, Income, and Marital Status of the Sample by Sex

Age	
Male	
Female	
Education (years)	
Male	
Female	
Occupation	
Male	
Female	
Income	
Male	
Female	
Marital Status	
Male	
Female	

Life Satisfaction Index

Agree	Disagree		Statement
____	____	1.	I am just as happy as when I was younger.
____	____	2.	These are the best years of my life.
____	____	3.	My life could be happier than it is now.
____	____	4.	This is the dreariest time of my life.
____	____	5.	Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.
____	____	6.	Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.
____	____	7.	The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.
____	____	8.	I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now.
____	____	9.	Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance.
____	____	10.	As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.
____	____	11.	I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.
____	____	12.	I feel old and somewhat tired.
____	____	13.	As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.
____	____	14.	I would not change my past life even if I could.
____	____	15.	I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.
____	____	16.	When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.
____	____	17.	In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.
____	____	18.	I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.
____	____	19.	Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life.
____	____	20.	I feel my age, but it does not bother me.